LAND CALLS FOR CAPITAL

EDWARD G. CORNELL.

F[illegible] and thirty years I have been wandering about the world listening for the voice of the spellbinder. Once I almost fancied I heard it afar, faint echo of that voice in the great waste lands which lie between Siberia and China, the land where the nomadic Mongol roams with his flocks and herds, his droves of wild horses and his mobs of camels, but that echo was drowned by the hum of China's industries and died in behind the Great Wall behind the ramparts of the treacherous Zuyder Zee and the Dutchman's dikes.

Then I stood in the midst of that great unknown land, where so few white men have trod during the passing of the centuries that China's teeming hordes must some day break beyond the Great Wall and engulf Mongolia, and so the wizard voice of the spellbinder died away. Mongolia with all its hidden wealth will never be a white man's land, it must be a yellow or a brown people's country.

The spellbinder's voice was there, but it was not meant for a white man's ears. In Australia, in Russia and other lands I had heard just a flutter of the voice, but it was not until I came to Argentina two years ago that I heard the call ring out clear and high, the call of the money-less land to the landless men.

The English heard that cry a long time ago, but they did not grasp its inner meaning. To them the cry was pregnant with profit, but their clumsy manipulation of its possibilities strangled or stunted the thing they created before it was rid of its swaddling clothes. English enterprise has done but little for this country, even from the immediate vicinity of the capital.

There are millions upon millions of acres of fertile forest as yet untouched by the woodman's axe. There are numberless miles of virgin soil unbroken by the plough, and all this land is sleeping as it has slept since the birth of time, and nothing can wake it from its neolithic sleep but the clink of the minted metal. The godless land calls in terms of dumb eloquence to the landless gold, for this rich brown soil must marry money before it can bear God's children, and the children this soil can bring forth are [illegible] corn and wheat, barley and oats, sugar and sheep, cattle and horses, wine and oil. Every hill is a vineyard or an orange orchard in embryo, every valley a garden for the children of the gods. The people all have Spanish blood in them, and Spanish blood is indolent blood. Mix it with Chaco Indian blood and it becomes stagnant as far as work is concerned, and it is nearly all mixed Spanish and Chaco Indian a few miles inland. These folk speak of the valleys as "Las Rodillas de Dios," or "God's Lap." That expression is as common as cucumbers in Covent Garden market in the season.

The indolent natives are good at poetic diction, and there is some excuse for speaking this way of valleys that will grow [illegible] nearly anything with the slightest possible labor.

It would break one of your Western cattle kings' hearts to see them breeding cattle and horses in the interior of this noble country. They may have known something about it many centuries ago, but they have forgotten all about it now and the horses and cattle breed just as the grasses grow. There is no selection, no knowledge of selection, everything runs wild and runs as it likes, just as the forest foliage does, and not one small breeder in a million in the far back country would know a polled angus bull from a pudding faced policeman.

The climatic conditions are all against the English fancy bred stock, and the English fancy breeder knows no more about breeding pedigree animals for ranch purposes than a town dog knows about catching coyotes; and what is more, they don't want to learn and won't try. They say, "our stock is the best in the world, take it or leave it," and they walk around this market like a sacred cow round a coolie cabbage stand in a Calcutta bazaar.

Your ranchers ought to turn their eyes in this direction. I do not refer now to the breeders of pedigree stock, but to ordinary beef and mutton breeds. Here meat is money, and yet everything is done in such a hopeless, go as you please style that the wonder is how they make the beef and mutton propositions pay, but they do, and what is more they make big fortunes at it. There is not one decently kept herd of beef in the whole country except that of the Liebigs, the meat extract people, and their herd does not amount to much. I have been all over their breeding grounds and have very carefully inspected their stock. The animals are good, but very few in number. These are kept mainly for show purposes; the animals they kill are bought from other estancias.

Liebigs kill 1,500 head of steers a day for six months in the year, and there is an enormous demand for good beef for overseas markets; it's a veritable honeypot for a good beef breeder, and the wonder is that Americans have not rolled in here in their thousands. Pretty nearly all the hides, hoofs and horns go to Great Britain and Europe, and there are colossal fortunes waiting enterprising men with capital who understand tanning and fellmongery.

Labor is not dear in these parts and as I write there are hundreds of Sikhs walking about looking for work which they cannot obtain and they are clamoring to be repatriated to India. There is no end of Italian labor to be picked up all the year round. Folks who may come here from the United States to start beef killing need have no fear whatever concerning labor for butchering, skinning and so forth, for the Chaco is full of red Indians who make wonderful butchers and skinners with very little practice, and they can be obtained in large numbers at a cheap rate, far cheaper than Italian labor. One Indian is worth three Italians in a killing shed. They are very reliable when well treated and make ideal cattlemen.

There is not a solitary tannery of any importance in the whole republic, and there is room for fifty. The truth is that the Argentines are not a manufacturing people, they have not the inclination nor the energy for that kind of work. None of their forebears were manufacturers, the strain is not in the blood and there will be no manufactures here of any account until men settle here who come of manufacturing stock. The biggest line down here is boots and shoes, but Government statistics show that in the whole country, from border to border, there are not 20,000 folk, men, women and children, employed in that line. There are openings here on all sides for factories, foundries and every kind of machine making industries, but I prefer not to deal with the cities at present, the country is sufficient for one article and the country is worthy of your consideration.

If American capital came here and laid down railways and opened up farming districts the returns would be gigantic. The English railways have not been laid down on that plan. They star at the capital and run nowhere in partcular, and pick up very little in between. The English do not understand railway building in new countries, how should they? Their experience is limited to an old country, where a railway runs through many cities, and cuts through settled land all the way. They do not know how to open up new wild land by settling farmers to feed the railways. Their game has mostly been stock juggling on the markets rather than stock raising in the wilds. Railways would pay here in almost any direction if the men handling the propositions knew the business as your railway pioneers know it. Farmers would soon follow the railway lines if they were catered to. But the Government does nothing, and the railways do less. And yet a vast quantity of cereals is grown every year, wheat, oats, linseed and corn. With a proper railway system, working in conjunction with farming settlements, the output could be enlarged to such an extent as to affect appreciably the markets of the whole world, for the soil of this country is capable of performing miracles, but up to date no railway genius has appeared above the Argentine horizon.

It is no use to come here to settle as farmers, hombres, until you are well within the shelter of American railways; then come quickly or you will be too late, for under a good railway system the best lands would be snapped up greedily. There is plenty of room here for railway systems that will open up land enough to carry two or three millions of farms, and there are fortunes to be made out of properly laid out towns, villages and cities in the interior. So far there is only one city in the republic, and that is Buenos Ayres, situated on the La Plata River, and the suburbs of this city have no roads or footpaths that are one whit better than the mud walk between wigwams in an Indian village.

The chief street of any inland town after a fall of rain is like a buffalo wallow and the smell of the garbage in those same streets in hot weather is as rotten as a politician's promises. They don't know any more about town drainage than a sitting hen knows about Paderewski.

All that sort of thing could easily be done away with if the folk were not born tired. Those not born tired catch the complaint early and never get rid of it. If a good American railway system permeated the country and good clean villages came into existence the places could be converted into little paradises and the promoters reap a golden harvest, but if the attempt were made as things now are the promoters would drop their cash, for the towns would be sidetracked and the trains forget to call.

There is a glamour about this country, but you must not be carried away by the glamour, or you will drop your dollars. You must not lay out farming districts or town sites until you have the railway in the vicinity under American control. If you do you will wake up with your mouth full of bitter herbs and your pockets full of empty spaces.

There are some Government railways which might be purchased. I have one in my mind's eye at the present moment. It extends from Tucuman to the Bolivian border, passing through the old world Spanish city of Jujuy, a little city that has been asleep for many generations, a city where the señoritas move about with faces muffled in mantillas, and the hardest labor of the hombres is pulling tobacco out of cigarettes, which they make with their fingers and make so deftly that they go on making them in their sleep at times.

This railroad, as a railroad, is a fine piece of engineering. The man who carried it out must have fancied he was building it for boys to run wheelbarrows on. In hot weather it expands and buckles until the engine has to do as many tricks as a circus horse to keep on the rails as it rushes along like a tornado at the terrific speed of some eight or ten miles an hour. The engineer once told me as I ran alongside his engine on an up grade trying to cheer him up that he had once done eleven miles an hour for a wager. If he did some folks must have been running behind to push. In wet weather that line is as thrilling as a dime novel.

That line is worth, or would be worth, untold wealth to a company that had money behind it and brains to put into the development of the line and the country it is the only highway from the far north to the capital, and for all practical purposes that line as it is at present is no more use to the northern provinces than a paper leg would be to a ballet dancer.

There is an enormous tract of fine fertile land lying idle. It belong to this, the most supine of all Governments, and can be bought for $1 a hectárea, and a hectárea is two and a half acres. The land is all heavily timbered, and the timber is useful and marketable.

I have ridden for days on end in the saddle in these forests and have been amazed by the gigantic wealth that is going to waste for the want of live men with red blood in their veins and good gray matter in their heads. It is a wilderness of trees waiting to be turned into cash. The cedar, walnut and oak are equal to the best European woods of the same species.

There is one thing they can do better than any people that have sprung from the womb of time, they can sleep: how they can sleep!

The rivers sing aloud a song of welcome which ought long ago to have reached your ears. The evergreen glades, where the dainty humming birds flutter like living fragments of dismembered rainbows, rustle their rich grasses in the whispering winds and every whisper carries a welcome to you to come and bring your life giving virility with you, for the earth, the water and the woods are weary to death of their unfruitfulness. Nature pines to fulfil its place in the scheme of things for here God, Himself, is crucified upon a cross of human slothfulness, while millions starve in overcrowded cities.

MOVING PICTURE REALISM ILLUSTRATING STRENUOUS DRAMA OF WESTERN LIFE. CAPTAIN WELCH IS FOUND BY THE INDIANS.

SOLE OWNER OF BELT LINE

IN these days of great combinations of street railway lines it has come to be a rather strange thing for one man to own independently nineteen miles of trackage in a city like New York. Edward Cornell, a lawyer whose name was until November 15 practically unknown to the public, is the owner of such a road, which belts the greatest business district in the world. That is the Central Park, North and East River Railroad Company, which runs along Fifty-ninth street and from each end of that thoroughfare to the Battery along both river fronts.

Wall Street is speculating a great deal on who is back of the deal which so surprised it when Mr. Cornell stepped forward with a check for $50,000 and showed an inclination to bid against Theodore P. Shonts when the line was put up at auction in a foreclosure sale by order of Judge Lacombe of the Federal court. Mr. Cornell has not said a great deal except that he represents Edward Cornell in the purchase.

Those who are not on the strictest terms of friendship with Mr. Shonts and his associates are still chuckling over the bidding. It seemed to be a foregone conclusion that the New York Railways Company would get the line through Fifty-ninth street. There was no movement to buy the line in any other quarter and the New York company needed it. Preparations were made to take it over. The directors of the company even had drafted a plan of reorganization and had submitted it to the Public Service Commission. And a hearing on this plan was to have been held before the commission on the very afternoon of the sale. It was not held.

Mr. Shonts headed a committee of directors of the New York Railways Company and attended the sale. Everything seemed to be going just as it had been planned. The attorney in charge read the terms of the sale and then asked for bids.

Mr. Shonts stepped forward with the ease of one who is used to carrying $50,000 without stumbling and handed up the check for that amount. Then he stepped back and impressively bid $300,000 for the line. There was a pause and Mr. Shonts was just preparing to put the road in his waistcoat pocket and take it home when a short stout man, preceded by a mustache that looks a great deal like E. H. Harriman's, stepped forward and without so much as the slightest stumble handed up a check for $50,000. This check was favorably passed on and Mr. Cornell, for it was none other, gracefully bid $500,000.

From then on until the price went up to $1,650,000 the bidding was merry, Mr. Shonts looking hard at his opponent and trying to place him the while. At that figure, Mr. Shonts paused and hesitated. It is said that he who hesitates is lost. Mr. Shonts was almost, but not quite lost. He shoved the price up another $10,000. Then the unknown lawyer said a few thousands more. After Mr. Shonts had consulted with his associates for a moment or two he silently gave way. Mr. Cornell found himself in prospective possession of the road at $1,673,000.

He seemed quite satisfied with his purchase. And the New York Railways Company did not get the line for $300,000. Mr. Shonts did not say whether $1,660,000 was all the change he had with him or not, but there is where he stopped bidding. Since then there has been a good deal of interest in Mr. Cornell as well as speculation as to why he bought the road.

Mr. Cornell has a pleasant manner. He never frowns and he wears an almost perpetual smile which is very frank and natural. Although approaching middle age he has very few if any gray hairs. There is health in his full cheeks. He is of medium height and carries the avoirdupois which grows on men who spend long hours at their desks.

"Now as to the men who are back of you in this street railway deal?" he was asked.

Mr. Cornell smiled just a bit craftily. Then he replied:

"Well, of course, I did not buy the line with the hard earned savings of my law practice."

That was as far as he would go. He seemed to rather enjoy the eagerness with which newspaper reporters had been asking him the same question.

"Now," he continued, "if you really wish to know something of my life—although I can't see why—I was born in Central Valley, N. Y. That was quite a few years ago. My father was David Cornell, who was in turn a farmer, a surveyor and a teacher. In the latter he was associated with Tomas Estrada Palma, later President of Cuba, in the conduct of a private school at Central Valley.

"I went to school there for a time and then finished my early education in one of the telegraph offices of the Erie Railroad."

"Oh, then you do know something about the railroad business?"

"Very little. One can't learn much about the railroad business in five years in a telegraph office. No, I wouldn't say I knew anything about the business. That's a good many years ago.

"I studied law at Cornell University, where I was also librarian in the law school in 1891. In that year I was admitted to the bar and came to New York. I have been with the same firm ever since. When I came here it was Lowry, Stone & Auerbach. There were some changes through the years and in 1895 I was taken into the firm of Davies, Stone & Auerbach."

The firm is now Davies, Auerbach, Cornell & Barry and it occupies offices at 54 Nassau street. Office boys and clerks are very thick, and it is a hard matter for one without an appointment to get in to see any member of the firm, especially Mr. Cornell, who is pestered every few moments with the card of some one who has something to tell him about the efficiency of this or that street railway device or improvement.

"Tell him he is about three weeks ahead of time," he replied to the boy who brought in the card of one of these agents, whose well filled card must have indicated that he represented an invention without which one might as well give up trying to run the Fifty-ninth street belt line. But Mr. Cornell's smile indicated that he was considering the operation of his property without the invention with the pleasantest of anticipations.

Mr. Cornell had just returned from paying something over $100,000 in cash as a part of the purchase price of his line, it being the tenth part which he was obliged to hand to the court on that day, and he seemed quite satisfied with himself. Who wouldn't be satisfied to be able to stuff $100,000 into his pocket, pin the pocket shut with a safety pin or something of the same nature, and walk into court, there to calmly count it out and hand it to the Judge?

"You're married, I suppose, Mr. Cornell?"

"Oh, yes," he replied in a manner as if it implied no great undertaking. But about the children, it was another matter.

For Mr. Cornell is the father of twins. Not only that, but he is proud of it; that could easily be detected in the way of his speaking about them.

"Twins!" his visitor exclaimed.

"Sure, twins," he answered. This time he didn't smile. He grinned very broadly. The idea of the twins interested him more and seemed to tickle him to a far greater extent than that of having contracted to pay $1,673,000 for a street railway.

"I've got other children," he added. "Five in all. Two girls and three boys. The twins are boys. We all live over in Brooklyn at 43 Willow street in the winter and up at our country place in Central Valley in the summer. Yes, we've got twins, both boys.

"That is all you want to know, isn't it?" he asked. "Certainly I can be of very little interest to the public."

"Well, you are. You see it's not a usual thing for one man to come out and buy a street railway line without there being some interest in who he is, where he comes from and what he intends to do with the road," was the reply.

"I seem to be well enough known to all intents and purposes," the new street railway owner said. "THE SUN says so, I know, for I read it every morning. The other day it remarked that my name was in the directory and the telephone book. Before long it will be in the street railway records too, so you see I will be quite as well known as one would wish to be."

"Are you going to make any changes in the running of the line?"

"Oh, naturally, if a business proposition has not been making money the new owners would want to see what was the matter and make the changes necessary to make the ledgers balance a bit more the right way. I have not said I will take the horse cars off, but any one with any sense knows that horse cars do not pay under present conditions. I have not said that we will put storage battery cars along West street, but I guess it is pretty generally understood that West street is too near the water front to use the underground trolley system."

Mr. Cornell refused to talk further about himself.

And, anyway, he showed that he is really very much prouder of the twins than he is of his advent into the street railway world.

AVENGED BY HYDRANT

"You know the crowding, pushing, ill mannered chaps," said Mr. Goslington, "that elbow their way through and crowd you off into the gutter, like as not, and pass right on with never a thought? I encountered one of them this morning in Sixth avenue.

"He overtook me, coming up from the rear, walking faster than I, and when he had come to me he didn't sheer out, but kept right along, shouldering me so that I almost fell into the street. But in one brief moment I was more than fully avenged.

"Just as this ill mannered chap shouldered me I had arrived at a fire hydrant, for which I was about to sheer out. You know the fire hydrant? Built of cast iron, very, very hard, and standing up rigidly, very, very rigidly. You can't just shoulder a fire hydrant out of the way, and just as this man shouldered me out of his course he came upon that fire hydrant, which with me covering it from view he had not seen. His next rude, reckless step forward carried him up against this fire hydrant fair and square kerbunk!

"And it didn't break his leg, but it did make him limp; he limped quite perceptibly, I was pleased to see, as he walked away."